

LITTLE BLUE BOOK NO. 682  
Edited by E. Haldeman-Juliu

# Grammar Self Taught

Lloyd E. Smith



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## GRAMMAR

He who speaks faultless English, always, on all occasions, is something of a rarity. With a careful guard on their tongues, most educated people can deliver a reasonably correct speech. (Precise users of English would balk right here: a thing is either correct or incorrect, so that a "reasonably correct" speech is non-extant.) But pernicious habits of tongue or pen are persistent, and they are far more easily acquired than eradicated. To a great many people such expressions as "between you and I" and "he don't know" do not sound wrong, for they are in the habit of hearing them constantly. Even "he done it" seems all right to lots of otherwise unoffending speakers of the language. And "I don't hardly think so" or one of its many brothers is probably on the lips of thousands daily, and not thousands of the illiterate, either.

In most of the fundamental principles of grammar nothing new or startling will be found by the average well-read person. It is quite possible to learn to talk and to read fairly good English without being able to tell a noun from a verb. Why learn it at all, then? Chiefly because it vastly simplifies matters, and, instead of making language more difficult, eases the way to a better understanding and a better use of its possibilities. When learning to talk, words are learned first. Then words are put together, one after another. This order is not a matter of chance. It would

require at least a few seconds of mental gymnastics to get the sense of such a jumbled sentence as this: "Him might it been wasn't whom have it." Indéed, it may be impossible to understand it at all. In its proper order, though incorrect grammatically, the sentence reads: "It wasn't him whom it might have been." Now it is intelligible, but it is not correct. However, it is quite understandable without being correct. The same reasons for having the words in the proper order apply also to having the words in the proper form. There is no difference. One is just as much a part of the language as the other.

Some people avoid the study or even the slightest consideration of grammar because they abhor the discipline involved. The same people break other laws for the same reason. But there is no real foundation for a fear of grammar because it is hard. You will meet with a few new names, but technical terms can be discarded as soon as you understand the principles behind them. You may never have to know what a *pronominal adjective* is, but it will probably prove of some value to be able to tell a *plain* adjective from, say, an adverb.

Grammar is a nightmare to some people, as witness the following doggerel which the writer composed when in high school, hardly aware of preparing some day even so brief a text as this on the subject which he then abhorred. The verses occur on the first and last covers of a "grammar and rhetoric" text:

The silver lining of a cloud  
Does not concern this book,  
For he who reads enters his shroud,  
And is by all forsook.



Farewell, thou who hast spoiled my life,  
My brain hast filled with ceaseless strife:  
Yet may thou ever rest in peace—  
Though mine thou hast without release.

*Common Faults in Writing English* (Little Blue Book No. 82) is a desirable supplementary text.

## THE PARTS OF SPEECH

## I. NOUN

The *noun* is one of the eight classes of words in the English language. Each word in every sentence, according to its nature, form, or use, can be classified under one of these heads: noun, pronoun, adjective, verb, adverb, preposition, conjunction, and interjection.

DEFINITION.—A *noun* is the name of something. It may be the name of something visible or invisible, substantial or ethereal, real or fancied, abstract or concrete. As long as the word names something it is a *noun*. Examples: *table, roof, sky, honesty, boy, death, goodness, reality*. Nouns are things that are talked about and described. They usually answer the child's perpetual question: "What is it?" The names of the parts of speech in the first paragraph above are all nouns—in this very sentence, the nouns are: *names, parts, speech, paragraph, nouns, sentence*.

COMMON AND PROPER.—Nouns are commonly divided into *proper* and *common* nouns. Almost all nouns are common, and all *proper nouns begin with a capital letter*, for a proper noun is the *name* of some particular individual or individual thing apart from its group. Thus, *speed* is a common noun, but if the word is used as the name of a power-boat, it becomes *Speed*, a proper noun. All names of persons, places, geographical features (that is, their specific names), and so on, are proper nouns. All nouns that are not proper are common. Examples of *proper nouns*: *John Smith*,

*Massachusetts, Lusitania, France, the Nile, English* (used as the name of the language), the *Bible, Chicago*, etc. Of these, *smith* is a common noun when it is used as the name of any man working in metals, and not as the surname of one particular man. For further discussion of proper nouns, with particular reference to capitalization, see the section on the Capital and Hyphen in *Spelling Self Taught* (Little Blue Book No. 681).

Nouns are sometimes further classified, but the names are not necessary for a clear understanding of the principles of grammar. *Collective* nouns define themselves (examples: *committee, congregation, flock, herd, group, crowd*). *Verbal* nouns are parts of verbs used as nouns (examples: *Walking* is healthful; *To work* is desirable). *Abstract* nouns name the quality, condition, or relation of an object (examples: *honesty, height, nearness, goodness*).

**GENDER.**—The English language has three genders—nouns are *masculine* or *feminine* or *neuter*, depending on whether they refer to something male, female, or neither. Thus, *boy* and *king* are masculine; *girl* and *queen* are feminine; and all nouns that are definitely neither masculine nor feminine are neuter, as: *house, road, water*, etc. Nouns that may be either masculine or feminine are commonly treated as neuter (examples: *child, bird, dog*, etc.), although some grammarians term them *common gender*.

Gender presents practically no difficulties in English. There are no exceptions to the rules stated above. And, for most words, the form does not change to show gender. There are a few pairs of masculine and feminine words, however, which are worth consideration. The

Commoner nouns of this class follow (the masculine form is given first):

abbot—abbess  
 administrator—  
     administratrix  
 actor—actress  
 arbiter—arbitress  
 author—authoress  
 baron—baroness  
 beau—belle  
 buck—doe  
 bull—cow  
 colt—filly  
 count—countess  
 czar—czarina  
 drake—duck  
 duke—duchess  
 earl—countess  
 emperor—empress  
 executor—executrix

gander—goose  
 god—goddess  
 hero—heroine  
 horse (or stallion)—  
     mare  
 host—hostess  
 lad—lass  
 lion—lioness  
 lord—lady  
 man—woman  
 merman—mermaid  
 peer—peeress  
 sir—madam  
 stag—hind  
 sultan—sultana  
 swain—lass  
 waiter—waitress  
 wizard—witch

The feminine endings, if there are such in English, are two: *-ix* and *-ess*. Thus, *poet* becomes *poetess* and *aviator*, *aviatrix*. There is no rule save observation, but this need not be a cause for worry. The tendency is toward the elimination of these arbitrary forms for masculine and feminine, toward the use of the masculine form exclusively, whether the subject is masculine or feminine. Thus the term *poet* has come to include both men and women, and the same is becoming true of the word *actor*. The distinction between *executor* and *executrix*, and similar words, is preserved chiefly in legal documents.

Names of countries, states, and ships are commonly regarded as feminine. The planets are masculine or feminine according to the gender of their deity in classical mythology (the *sun* is masculine, from Apollo; the *moon* femi-

nine, from Diana). *Winter* is usually thought of as an old man, and therefore masculine, while *spring* is personified as a blithe damsel, and is feminine. These distinctions, however, are neither necessary nor universal. It is quite permissible to regard all such words as neuter.

**NUMBER.**—Nouns are either *singular* or *plural*, depending on whether they refer to *one* unit of their class, or to more than one. Plurals are regularly formed by adding *-s* or *-es* to the singular. For rules and irregularities, see the section on the Formation of Plurals under **WORD BUILDING AND CHANGING** in *Spelling Self Taught* (Little Blue Book No. 681).

**PERSON.**—Nouns (and pronouns) are in the *first person* if they refer to the person speaking; in the *second person* if they refer to the person spoken to; and in the *third person* if they refer to the person spoken about. Person is discussed more at length under the *Pronoun*.

**CASE.**—Strictly speaking, case (with the exception of the possessive) is of no importance in English nouns, for they are not inflected to show their use. But for a clear understanding of grammatical principles, it is necessary to understand the three cases and their uses (especially with reference to pronouns). Once grammar is mastered, the cases may be forgotten.

The *nominative* case and the *objective* (or *accusative*) case are identical in form for English nouns, but their use is very different. Indeed, the only way that the case of an English noun can be determined is by its position and use in a sentence (the possessive case excepted).

### Examples of the nominative case:

1. Subject of a finite verb: The *hat* is here.
2. In apposition with another noun (that is, referring to the same person or thing as another noun) in the nominative case: Mary's present, a *hat*, is here. (*Hat* refers to the same object as *present*, which is in the nominative case as subject of *is*.)
3. Used in the predicate ("predicate noun" or "predicate nominative"), chiefly after the verb *to be* (verbs are designated by their *infinitives*; see the *Verb*), referring to the same object as the subject (sometimes spoken of as modifying the subject): Mary's present is a *hat*. (*Hat* refers to the same object as *present*, but is in the predicate—that is, is after the verb *is*.)
4. Independently, in address: *Mary*, bring me your hat. (This is sometimes, though rarely, termed the *vocative* case.)
5. Independently, or in absolute construction, with a participle (see *Verb*): The *hat* having been brought, I thanked Mary for it.

### Examples of the objective case:

1. Direct object of a transitive (one that takes an object) verb: Give Mary the *hat*.
2. Indirect object (usually the *destination* of the direct object, with *to* understood when not expressed): Give *Mary* the hat (that is, Give the hat to *Mary*).
3. Object of a preposition (see *Preposition*): Flowers are on the *hat* (object of *on*).
4. In apposition (see 2, under nominative case, above) with another noun in the objective case: The puppy chewed her present, a new

*hat*. (*Present*, with which *hat* is in apposition, is objective as object of *chewed*.)

5. Subject of an infinitive (see *Verb*): The puppy made the *hat's flowers* droop ("to droop" understood, *flowers* being the subject of *to droop*).

6. Adverbially (see *Adverb*), expressing measure: The puppy carried the hat a *mile*.

7. A predicate noun (see 3, under nominative case, above), this time with a transitive verb, used to modify the *object* (this use is not very common): Mary called the puppy a *brute*.

The possessive case:

Always indicates possession, or ownership, and is formed by adding 's to the singular, unless it ends in -s when the apostrophe alone is now considered sufficient unless an extra s is necessary to make a pronounceable form, and by adding the apostrophe alone to the plural when it ends in -s (otherwise add 's). Examples: *man's, men's; boy's, boys'; John Keats' poetry*.

Possessives of compound nouns are formed by adding the 's (or apostrophe) to the last portion of the compound. Examples: *son-in-law's, sons-in-law's*.

Avoid forming possessives of long phrases by adding 's or the apostrophe to the last word. DO NOT WRITE: *The king of England's crown*. CORRECT: *The crown of the king of England*. Thus, it is seen that the possessive in English can be written with the preposition *of*, and this practise should be followed whenever the use of the possessive case is awkward.

Precise stylists avoid using the possessive case (as in 5, under objective case, above) with nouns referring to inanimate objects, but this

stern convention of an older day is not generally observed nowadays. Where the reference is unmistakable and the use of the possessive case is natural, such use is considered correct.

Forms in apposition (see 2, under nominative case, and 4, under objective case, above) sometimes create ambiguous combinations. It is correct to say: *John's, the grocery clerk's, wages.* *Clerk's* is in apposition with *John's* and must be in the same case. BETTER FORM: *The wages of John, the grocery clerk.* Here *clerk* is also in apposition with *John*, but both are in the objective case as objects of the preposition *of*.

Notice the distinction between individual and joint possession in these examples: *The books of John and Mary* (joint); *The books of John and of Mary* (individual) or *John's and Mary's books* (individual). Sometimes, in joint possession, the last noun is made possessive, as: *John and Mary's books.* However, this may be ambiguous, for if one says: *I saw John and Mary's books*, he may mean: *I saw John with Mary's books.* The latter form is, of course, correct to express that idea. The other should be reserved for joint possession only. With *or*, each noun is in the possessive case, as: *The books either of John or of Mary* or *Either John's or Mary's books.*

## 2. PRONOUN

A *pronoun* (*pro* signifies *for*, hence, *for a noun*) is used in the place of a noun, or stands for a noun, and obeys, in general, the rules that govern nouns. Its chief use is such that in speaking or writing English repeated reference to the same object can be made without constantly repeating the noun that names it.



Thus, we use *he* in speaking of someone we know, in a pro'onged conversation, instead of always calling him by name.

Pronouns, like nouns, have gender, number, and case. A pronoun must always *agree* with the noun (known as its *antecedent*, or the word which *comes before*) to which it refers, in gender and number. Pronouns may be of the *first person* (the person speaking, *I*), *second person* (the person spoken to, *you*), or *third person* (person spoken of or about, *he, she, it, they*). The pronoun, unlike the noun, is highly inflected, and changes its snelling to show its form and use. The inflections follow.

Case Singular

P'ural

### FIRST PERSON

NOM.	<i>I</i>	<i>we</i>
POS.	<i>my, mine</i>	<i>our, ours</i>
OBJ.	<i>me</i>	<i>us</i>

### SECOND PERSON

NOM.	<i>you (thou)</i>	<i>you (ye)</i>
POS.	<i>your, yours (thy, thine)</i>	<i>your, yours (you, yours)</i>
OBJ.	<i>you (thee)</i>	<i>you (you)</i>

### THIRD PERSON

NOM.	<i>he, she, it</i>	<i>they</i>
POS.	<i>his; her, hers; its</i>	<i>their, theirs</i>
OBJ.	<i>him, her, it</i>	<i>them</i>

Of the second person, above, the old "familiar address" forms are given in parentheses. They are no longer used save in the Bible, and in religious expressions generally.

Of the third person, the singular forms, as may be seen, are three in number, representing the masculine, feminine, and neuter genders, respectively. The first and second persons do

not change to show gender. The neuter form (*it, its*) is used not only for inanimate objects, but for animals and children (sometimes) when the gender is unknown or unimportant. When the gender of such indeterminate nouns as *friend, teacher, enemy, neighbor, relative*, etc., is unknown, it is customary to employ the masculine (generic use) forms of the pronoun throughout. Only in legal documents is the awkward *he or she, his or hers*, used.

The pronouns inflected above are known as the *personal* pronouns. Of the possessive forms, the first given (*my, our, your, his, her, its, their*) are used like adjectives (see *Adjective*) to modify nouns, and are sometimes called *pronomininal adjectives*. Examples: *His* book is here; *Their* cat is dead; Where is *her* hat? (in which *his* can be said to modify *book*, and so on). The other forms (*mine, ours; yours; his, hers, its; theirs*)—with the exception of *mine*, all ending in *-s*—are used as pronouns, in the place of nouns. Examples: The book is *mine*; The hat is *hers*; The cat is *theirs*. NOTE: Possessive forms of pronouns have no apostrophe.

Personal pronouns may be emphasized by adding *-self* or *-selves* to the simple form. Examples: I *myself* attended to it; Mary took the blame on *herself*; We went *ourselves*. All the forms are: *myself, yourself, thyself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, yourselves, themselves*. The form *hissself* does NOT exist. It is best to reserve these intensive forms for emphasis only, and to use the simple forms wherever possible. DO NOT SAY: *Two besides myself*. BETTER: *Two besides me*.

Be careful to have pronouns *always* agree with the nouns to which they refer, in *gender*, and *number*. DO NOT SAY: *Either John or I*

*forgot our tickets.* CORRECT: *Either John or James forgot his tickets.* (The subject is singular.) WRONG: *John and James left his coat.* RIGHT: *John and James left their coats.* (The subject is plural.)

Pronouns have all the uses of nouns, and follow the same rules as to case. NOTE: After any form of the verb *to be* (see 3, under uses of the nominative case, the *Noun*), the nominative and *not* the objective case is required. INCORRECT: *It is me; It will be them; Isn't it her?* CORRECT: *It is I; It will be they; Isn't it she?*

RELATIVE PRONOUNS.—A *relative pronoun* is simply one that *relates* to some *antecedent* (see above) previously expressed. The relative pronouns are: *who, which, what*, and the compounds: *whoever, whosoever, whatever, whatsoever, whichever, whichever*. They use the same forms for both singular and plural. The cases are very simple:

NOMINATIVE	<i>who</i>	<i>which</i>	<i>what</i>	<i>that</i>
POSSESSIVE	<i>whose</i>	<i>whose</i>	—	<i>whose</i>
OBJECTIVE	<i>whom</i>	<i>which</i>	<i>what</i>	<i>that</i>

The rules for the cases apply as to other pronouns. These forms are used indiscriminately for all genders. However, *which* is usually reserved for inanimate objects; or, better, *who* is used always for animate objects. Examples of correct use: I know the puppy *that* chewed Mary's hat; I saw a man *who* was very old; I saw several men *who* were very old; America is a land *that* everyone loves; I like walking, *which* is a healthful exercise; That is the boy *whose* dog bit me; I don't know him, *whoever* he is; The girl *whom* I love is charming; I didn't like it, *whatever* it was. Occasionally, it is possible to omit the relative *~*

together in English. Examples: Don't forget the matter I spoke to you about (*which* or *that* omitted; to avoid ending this particular sentence with a preposition, considered bad form by precise users of English, it would have to be written: Don't forget the matter about which I spoke to you); America is a land everyone loves (*that* omitted).

**INTERROGATIVE PRONOUNS.**—As their name implies, *interrogative* pronouns are used to ask questions. They are: *who*, *what*, *which*, with the possessive and objective forms of *who*: *whose* and *whom*. Examples: *Who* is he?; *Whose* dog is it?; *Whom* did he strike?; *What* is the matter?; *Which* road is the right one? They are also used in indirect questions, as: I don't know *what* the matter is; Can you tell me *who* did it? Interrogative pronouns, of course, have no antecedent. The object or person to which or to whom they refer is, naturally, unknown; otherwise there would be no question! In asking questions, *which*, as an interrogative pronoun, is often used to refer to persons. *What* is reserved for things.

**DEMONSTRATIVE PRONOUNS.**—The *demonstrative* pronouns demonstrate or point out. They are: *this* and *these*; *that* and *those*. They must agree with the noun they modify in number. The first pair (*this*, *these*) refers to things near at hand; the other pair (*that*, *those*) refers to objects further removed from the speaker. Notice the difference in sense between *this book* and *that book*—imagine yourself pointing them out. The first may be in your hand, the second on the table or in the bookcase. NEVER SAY: *these kind* or *those kind*. CORRECT: *this kind*, *these kinds*; *that kind*, *those kinds* (in this use they are called demonstrative adjectives).

**INDEFINITE PRONOUNS.**—The *indefinite* pronouns have no stated antecedent, and it is not usually known to whom or to what they refer. There are a great many of them, of which the more common ones are: *each, either, neither, some, any, few, all, both, one, none, many, anyone, someone, everyone, several, such, other, another*. *Oneself* is an intensive form of *one*. Be careful to distinguish their use as pronouns from their use, equally common, as adjectives. **PRONOUNS:** *One* of us is going; *All* must stay in today; *Several* departed; *Others* do it; etc. **ADJECTIVES:** *Some* boys ran away; *All* children are lovable; *Several* students failed; etc. Be sure that any personal pronouns having an indefinite pronoun for an antecedent agree with it in number, and gender where known. Thus, everyone liked *his* food (not *their*); Each of us took *his* share (not *our*).

### 3. ADJECTIVE

An *adjective* is a word that modifies or describes a noun or pronoun. Most adjectives are *descriptive*, for they name some quality of an object, telling its size, shape, color, etc. Examples: The *big* house on the hill is *green*; the *lively* dog; *thin* and *flimsy* cloth; the *high red* roof; the *stormy* sea; an *open* book. Adjectives number thousands in the English language, for it is a language especially rich in adjectives. A great many are formed from other parts of speech (as *stormy* from the noun *storm*; *slanting* from the verb *slant*; *upish* from the preposition *up*; etc.). Usually, adjectives come before the noun or pronoun they modify, but this is not by any means always the case. In the sentence: *The kettle is hot*, the adjective *hot* modifies *kettle*, but it is in the

predicate (called a "predicate adjective"). Similarly, in the sentence: *The weather became cold and the stars grew more bright*, both *cold* and *bright* are adjectives, modifying *weather* and *stars* respectively. An adjective usually follows a pronoun (it often precedes indefinite pronouns, as *the black one*), thus: We found him *well*.

The use of adjectives in English is very simple. They do not change their form to show number, gender, or case. *Pronominal adjectives* (or pronouns used as adjectives) are an exception to this (see *Pronoun*).

There are a few *proper* adjectives, derived from proper nouns, which always begin with capital letters. Examples: *The Roman* magistrate; *Elizabethan* London; *American* schools; etc.

ARTICLES.—The English language has three little words known as *articles*, which are really adjectives. They are: *a*, *an*, and *the*. Their use is familiar: the first two are indefinite, and *the* is definite. Notice the difference between *an apple* and *the apple*.

NUMERALS.—The numbers *one*, *two*, *three*, *four*, *ten*, *fifteen*, *thirty-six*, *five hundred*, etc., are known as the *cardinal numerals*. They may be used as adjectives (*one* boy, *three* girls, and *sixteen* adults) or as pronouns (*two* out of *three* hit the mark). The numbers *first*, *second*, *third*, *fourth*, *tenth*, *fifteenth*, *thirty-sixth*, *five-hundredth*, etc., are known as the *ordinal numerals*. They may also be used as adjectives (the *first* boy will dance with the *second* girl) or as pronouns (the *last* shall be *first*).

COMPARISON OF ADJECTIVES.—Adjectives in English do not change for number, gender, or case, but they do change to express varying

degrees of intensity in their descriptive powers. The *positive* degree denotes a simple quality of an object without comparing it with any other object having that same quality; the *comparative* degree denotes the quality of each of two objects compared one with the other; and the *superlative* degree denotes the quality of an object as compared with two or more other objects possessing that same quality. Thus, "a *red* sunset" is merely a statement of the color without comparison with any other sunsets; but "this is a *redder* sunset than that of yesterday" expresses a comparison of the quality (redness) of two sunsets; and "this is the *reddest* sunset I've ever seen" expresses a superlative comparison of the quality (redness) with reference to all other sunsets (more than two).

The regular adjectives form their comparative and superlative degrees by adding to the positive *-er* and *-est*, respectively. Examples: *green, greener, greenest; cold, colder, coldest; hot, hotter, hottest*. NOTE: Monosyllables ending in a consonant preceded by a single vowel normally double the consonant before adding the suffixes (notice *red* and *hot*). Adjectives are also compared by using *more* with the positive to form the comparative, and *most* with the positive to form the superlative. This is done when the use of *-er* and *-est* would make an awkward or unpronounceable form. Examples: *casual, more casual, most casual; careless, more careless, most careless*. Some adjectives may be compared either way, thus: *lively, livelier, liveliest; or lively, more lively, most lively*.

The degrees thus far mentioned are "upward," but adjectives are sometimes compared negatively, by the use of *less* and *least* with the

positive. Example: *wicked, less wicked, least wicked.*

Some adjectives cannot be compared, for they express qualities which are complete or fixed. Examples: *unique, perfect, circular, square, five-pointed, dead.* A thing is perfect or imperfect, square or not square—it is impossible for one thing to be *more square* than another (save when *square* is used in the sense of *honest*).

Irregular adjectives are exceptions to these rules, and their degrees of comparison must be learned. The more common forms follow, most of which will probably be familiar.

Positive	Comparative	Superlative
good, well	better	best
bad, ill	worse	worst
little	less, lesser	least
many, much	more	most
old	older, elder	oldest, eldest
late	later, latter	latest, last
fore	former	foremost, first
far	farther	farthest
(forth)	further	furthest
(out)	outer, utter	{ outmost, outermost { utmost, uttermost

#### 4. VERB

The *verb* is the word of *action* in English. Wherever verbs are something happens, is being done, has been done, or will be done. A *verb* asserts something concerning its subject (which may be one or more nouns or pronouns, or words used as nouns). Thus, in the little sentence *Babies cry*, the verb *cry* asserts something concerning its subject *babies*. The verb therefore tells what the subject does.

Verbs are divided into two main classes,



*transitive* and *intransitive*. A *transitive* verb takes an object (noun or pronoun, or word used as such, in the objective case); that is, it has an object of the action it asserts concerning its subject. In the sentence *Babies drink milk*, the noun *milk* is the object of the transitive verb *drink*, which asserts something concerning its subject *babies*. An *intransitive* verb has no such object; in the example given above, *cry* is an intransitive verb. There are some intransitive verbs, however, which require some word to complete their meaning (such verbs as *be*, *appear*, *seem*, *look*, *become*). One does not say merely *I am*, but adds some completing word, such as *I am cold*, *I am a boy*, *I am going*, etc. Of course, these verbs may stand in apparent incompleteness when they answer questions, for then the expressed question completes their meaning.

Since verbs are words of action, they express present, past, or future time of the action or assertion. They express action going on and action completed. Thus, they are said to have *tense*. Verbs change their form to express different tenses, and are said to be *conjugated*—the *conjugation* of a verb is a complete summary of all its forms. In order to conjugate a verb correctly it is necessary to know three of its forms, called its *principal parts*—the *infinitive*, *past tense*, and *past participle*.

The *infinitive* (unless otherwise specified, the present infinitive is always meant) is that form of the verb expressed with the preposition *to*. Verbs are usually named by their infinitives—though sometimes with the *to* omitted—as the verb *to be*, the verb *to work*, the verb *to love*, etc. Verbs named in this way are considered as a whole, in all their forms; but within a given sentence, the particular form of

the verb the sentence contains is called *the* verb in that sentence, and that form is considered apart from the verb as a whole.

The *past tense* (*indicative* mood, *active* voice is meant unless otherwise stated; see below) of *regular* verbs is formed by adding *-ed* (or *-d* when the verb ends in *-e*) to the infinitive (minus the *to*). Thus, the past tense of *work* is *worked*.

The *past participle* is formed in exactly the same way as the past tense, for all *regular* verbs. Verbs are *regular* when they form the principal parts according to this simple plan; all *irregular* verbs depart in some way from this system, and their principal parts must be memorized. The principal parts of any doubtful verb can always be found in a good dictionary. The *past participle* is used with what is known as an *auxiliary* verb to form the *compound tenses* (*I have worked*: the auxiliary is *have*, the past participle is *worked*). It is also used as an adjective (see *Adjective*) to modify nouns and pronouns, thus: We protect our *loved* ones.

Examples of principal parts of regular verbs: *love, loved, loved; walk, walked, walked; etc.* A list of some irregular verbs with their principal parts is appended at the end of this section.

To express their various degrees of meaning, then, verbs change their form in what are described as *voice, mood, tense, person, and number*. Of these, *tense* has already been explained; *person* is first, second, or third as with pronouns (*I work, you work, he works, etc.*); *number* is singular or plural (*he works, they work*).

There are two voices: *active* and *passive*. Their names explain them. The *active voice*

deals with subjects which do the acting; the *passive voice* deals with subjects acted upon. Thus, the subjects of verbs in the active voice *act*; the subjects of verbs in the passive voice, being acted upon, are *passive*. Active: *I strike*. Passive: *I am struck*. In these examples, the idea expressed is different in each. But the same idea may be expressed in either voice, thus: *The sun warms the world* (active) or *The world is warmed by the sun* (passive). In the passive voice there is nearly always a completing *agent*, expressed with *by*. The active form is much the more vivid, and is to be preferred to the passive for expressing action when the idea and spirit remain the same.

There are three moods: the *indicative*, the *imperative*, and the *subjunctive*. Most verbs in ordinary sentences are in the indicative mood, active voice. The passive voice is less common than the active; and, likewise, the imperative and subjunctive moods are far less common than the indicative. The *indicative* declares or *indicates* something. The *imperative* makes commands (imperative!), wishes, and entreaties. The *subjunctive* is the mood of doubt (it usually is a matter of doubt!), making conditional statements and wishes contrary to fact, usually with an introductory *if*. Indicative: *I go, you go, he goes*. Imperative: *Go!* Subjunctive: *If I were going* or *Were I to go*.

(Some grammarians add a *potential* mood, including verb forms used with such auxiliaries as *may, can, must, might, could, would, and should*, expressing desire, need, or possibility. It is easier to regard these as incomplete verbs—they are not conjugated throughout as are complete verbs—in the light of ordinary verbs in such forms as they occur.)

The best way to visualize and clarify this

rather complicated matter of verbs is to present a regular verb in complete conjugation, to serve as a guide for forming the various tenses in their voices and moods of all other verbs. For this purpose, for some strange reason, the verb *to love* (or simply the verb *love*) is extremely popular with grammarians of all languages. From Latin (*amo, amas, amat*) to English this verb has everything its own way. Writers of grammars seem determined to have humanity know at least this verb correctly! After all, it is a popular verb, and there is some merit in emphasizing it.

## CONJUGATION OF THE VERB LOVE

### INDICATIVE MOOD: ACTIVE VOICE

#### *\*Present Tense*

##### *Simple Form*

I love  
you love  
he loves  
we love  
you love  
they love

##### *Progressive Form*

I am loving  
you are loving  
he is loving  
we are loving  
you are loving  
they are loving

#### *Past Tense*

I loved  
you loved  
he loved  
we loved  
you loved  
they loved

I was loving  
you were loving  
he was loving  
we were loving  
you were loving  
they were loving

#### *Future Tense*

I shall love  
you will love  
he will love  
we shall love  
you will love  
they will love

I shall be loving  
you will be loving  
he will be loving  
we shall be loving  
you will be loving  
they will be loving

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### *Present Perfect Tense*

I have loved  
you have loved  
he has loved  
we have loved  
you have loved  
they have loved

I have been loving  
you have been loving  
he has been loving  
we have been loving  
you have been loving  
they have been loving

### *Past Perfect Tense*

I had loved  
you had loved  
he had loved  
we had loved  
you had loved  
they had loved

I had been loving  
you had been loving  
he had been loving  
we had been loving  
you had been loving  
they had been loving

### *Future Perfect Tense*

I shall have loved  
you will have loved  
he will have loved  
we shall have loved  
you will have loved  
they will have loved

I shall have been loving  
you will have been  
loving  
he will have been  
loving  
we shall have been  
loving  
you will have been  
loving  
they will have been  
loving

## INDICATIVE MOOD: PASSIVE VOICE

### *Present Tense*

I am loved  
you are loved  
he is loved  
we are loved  
you are loved  
they are loved

I am being loved  
you are being loved  
he is being loved  
we are being loved  
you are being loved  
they are being loved

### *Past Tense*

I was loved  
you were loved  
he was loved  
we were loved  
you were loved  
they were loved

I was being loved  
you were being loved  
he was being loved  
we were being loved  
you were being loved  
they were being loved

<i>Future Tense</i>	<i>Past Perfect Tense</i>
I shall be loved you will be loved, etc.	I had been loved you had been loved, etc.
<i>Present Perfect Tense</i>	<i>Future Perfect Tense</i>
I have been loved you have been loved, etc.	I shall have been loved you will have been loved, etc.

The progressive forms are rarely used in the future, present perfect, past perfect, and future perfect tenses. The first three forms in the first column of the Present Indicative, Active Voice, are singular; the next three are plural. The pronouns are not parts of the verb, but are given with the verb to show the verb's agreement with its subject in person and number. In the third person singular, *it* and *she* may, of course, be substituted for *he*, or any other noun or pronoun in the singular, just as any noun or pronoun in the plural may be substituted for *they* as subject of the plural form. third person.

The progressive forms differ from the simple forms in meaning. *I love* is a simple statement of fact, actively going on in the present, but without any precise indication that it is going on at the moment of speaking. Just as *I work* means that when there is work to do, I do it. But *I am working*, emphatically present, is a statement of work going on at the time of speaking. There are also the *emphatic* forms, conjugated with the auxiliary *do*, as *I do love*, *you do love*, etc., which are used chiefly in asking and answering questions. *Do you love? I do. But I don't believe you love. I tell you I do love.*

**FORMATION OF TENSES.**—The present indicative is formed directly from the infinitive (of the principal parts), making one change

only: adding -s to make the third person singular. The past tense is the second of the principal parts, and is conjugated in all persons, singular and plural, without change. The future tense is the infinitive again, conjugated with the auxiliaries *shall* and *will* (*shall* in the first persons, *will* in the others). The perfect tense is the past participle (third of the principal parts) conjugated with the auxiliary *have* in the present, past, and future tenses to form the present, past, and future perfect. The progressive forms are simply the *present participle* (infinitive plus -ing, dropping silent *e* or doubling a final consonant preceded by a single vowel in the case of monosyllables) plus the various tenses of the verb *be*.

The passive voice is formed with the past participle plus the various tenses of the verb *be*. The progressive forms of the passive voice are made by combining the present participle with the various progressive tenses of the verb *be* (*I am being*, etc.).

The forms with *thou* have not been given, to save space, since they are seldom used. They are ordinarily formed by adding -est or -st to the infinitive (*thou lovest*, *thou workest*, etc.), and when *be* is used (*thou art*, *thou wast*) or *have* (*thou hast*, *thou hadst*) or *shall* (*thou shalt*) or *will* (*thou wilt*) the infinitive or past participle of the main verb is used as above.

USES OF THE TENSES.—The difference between the progressive and simple forms has already been explained. The difference between the present, past, and future tenses is familiar to everyone by daily use. The *perfect* tenses tell of action completed or *perfected*. *I have finished* means that I am all done, that I *have completed* whatever task I was laboring upon.

*I had finished* (past perfect) expresses the same idea in more remote time, and is usually used with some other qualifying statement, as: *When you arrived, I had just finished supper. I shall have finished* (future perfect) expresses completed action in future time, as: *By the time you get there, I shall have finished writing.*

**IMPERATIVE AND SUBJUNCTIVE MOODS.**  
—The verb *love* has been conjugated in the indicative mood only. The other forms follow.

### IMPERATIVE MOOD

<i>Active Voice</i>	<i>Present</i>	<i>Passive Voice</i>
love		be loved
be loving		do be loved
do love		

### SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD: ACTIVE VOICE

<i>Simple Form</i>	<i>Present Tense</i>	<i>Progressive Form</i>
if I love		if I be loving
if you love		if you be loving
if he love		if he be loving
if we love		if we be loving
if you love		if you be loving
if they love		if they be loving

#### *Past Tense*

if (I, you, he) loved	if (I, you, he) were loving
if (we, you, they) loved	if (we, you, they) were loving

#### *Present Perfect Tense*

if (I, you, etc.) have loved	if (I, you, etc.) have been loving
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#### *Past Perfect Tense*

if (I, you, etc.) had loved	if (I, you, etc.) had been loving
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## SUBJUNCTIVE MOOD: PASSIVE VOICE

*Present Tense*

if (I, you, etc.) be loved

*Present Perfect Tense*if (I, you, etc.) have  
been loved*Past Tense*if (I, you, etc.) were  
loved*Past Perfect Tense*if (I, you, etc.) had  
been loved

The *if* is no more a part of the verb than the pronoun subjects, but it is usually used (or some other word like it, as: *though, lest, unless, that, till*) to introduce the subjunctive. To conserve space, only the present indicative has been given in full, but the other forms are easily expanded for the peculiar characteristic of the subjunctive is that no tense changes any of its forms to show person or number. The progressive form is very rare in the passive voice. Note further that some of the subjunctive forms are the same as the indicative. The subjunctive, as such, is becoming rare in English. Either the indicative is used, or forms conjugated with the auxiliaries *may* and *might* express the same idea; *should* and *would* are also so used. Thus, instead of *if it be so* we now say *if it is so*; instead of *I wish that he have luck* we say *I wish that he may have luck*.

The past tense of the subjunctive, however, is still widely used, for it expresses an idea essentially different from the past indicative. Note *I was walking* and *if I were walking* (or simply *I was* and *if I were*). Compare these two sentences: (1) If the play *was* good, they *must* have enjoyed it; (2) If the play *were* good, they *might* enjoy it. The first expresses what probably happened in *past* time under a given condition (it is not a supposition, but a simple statement). The second does not state a fact.

but speculates on a condition that might occur if something *were* a fact—the play, very apparently, is not good, but someone is amusing himself speculating that if it *were*, and so on. This sentence is NOT past time. Similarly, in expressing wishes, always say *if I were king* (but you're not!), and not *if I was king* (or *I wish I were king*, and not *I wish I was king*—but you might say the latter for past time, as *I wish I was king when Columbus discovered America*, or something like that). But even for wishes in past time, the perfect forms of the subjunctive are better (as *I wish I had been king*).

**THE RULE.**—Past indicative expresses past time. Past subjunctive expresses uncertainty, extreme doubt, or a condition known to be contrary to fact.

**INFINITIVES AND PARTICIPLES.**—To complete the conjugation of the verb *love* it is necessary to add the several forms of its infinitives and participles. Of these, the *present infinitive* and the *present* and *past participles* have already been explained.

#### INFINITIVES

<i>Active Voice</i>	<i>Passive Voice</i>
<i>Present:</i> to love, to be loving	to be loved
<i>Present Perfect:</i> to have loved, to have been loving	to have been loved

#### PARTICIPLES

<i>Present:</i> loving	being loved
<i>Past:</i> loved	loved
<i>Present Perfect:</i> having loved, having been loving	having been loved

These need little explanation. Unfamiliar forms are not in common use, and the expression of time is the same as for the regular tenses. The *infinitive* is often used substantively (that is, as a noun; see *Noun*). Examples: "*To be* or not *to be*, that is the question"; "*To see* is *to believe*"; "*To have loved* and lost is better than never *to have loved* at all." The present participle is also used substantively (known as the *gerund*). Examples: "*Seeing* is *believing*"; "*Swimming* is great sport"; and in the child's corruption "*Finding's keeping*." Used substantively, the infinitive sometimes omits its *to* (as in "We saw the boys *save* the dog"), and it can be modified and take an object (as dog). Sometimes, too, the infinitive is used adverbially (see *Adverb*) as in this sentence: "We waited *to pounce* on him"; or adjectively (see *Adjective*) as in this example: "I am looking for something *to do*." The present participle and past participle, or, in fact, any participle, may be used adjectively (a *fighting* cock; a *painted* ship upon a *painted* ocean; *having loved*, I know; *having been duped* once, I am wiser; etc.). Be careful, when using a participle adjectively, to have some substantive (word used as a noun) present for it to modify. DO NOT SAY: *Hurrying to the door, there stood a policeman!* CORRECT: *Hurrying to the door, he saw a policeman standing there!*

SHALL and WILL.—The future tense and the future perfect tense are formed by using *shall* and *will* as auxiliaries—*shall* always in the first persons singular and plural; *will* in the second and third persons, singular and plural. Exactly the reverse of this occurs (*will* in first person; *shall* in second and third) to express *determination, volition, purpose*. *I shall go* is a

simple statement of action to occur in the future. *I will go* expresses determination, at all costs, no matter what happens. Ponder the difference between these two versions of a classic example: (1) *I shall drown, nobody will save me*; (2) *I will drown, nobody shall save me*. As a guide, remember the commandment *Thou shalt not kill*, which is a command (determination) in the second person—thus *shall* in second and third persons for determination, and *will* therefore in the first person; and just the reverse for simple future.

In asking questions, it is customary to use *shall* with the first person *always*. With the second and third persons, use *shall* when it is expected in the answer (*Shall you go?—I shall*) and *will* when it is expected in the answer (*Will you go?—I will*).

SHOULD and WOULD.—When used in the past sense of *shall* and *will*, *should* and *would* are governed by the same rules. *Would* is used with all three persons to express a wish. It also has an idiomatic use with all three persons, signifying customary or habitual action in past time: *He would toss all night without sleeping*; or *Remember the days when we would go barefoot every summer?* *Should* is used with all three persons in conditional clauses (with *if* or a similar conjunction; see *Conjunction*). *Should* is also used in the sense of *ought*: *You shouldn't do that*. Marietta Knight in her little English manual quotes a passage that is a striking illustration of the uses of these words. It is from a private letter of Edward Rowland Sill:

I know that, in point of fact, you will always enjoy writing, and I shall always enjoy reading your stories: indeed, you SHALL go on writing

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them, and I WILL go on reading them, even though you should not use "would" as you should, or as you would if you should use "would" and "should" as Shakespeare or Mr. Matthew Arnold would.

The distinction between *should* and *would* in indirect discourse, however, causes lots of trouble. *Direct discourse* is the direct expression of the words of a speaker, with quotation marks: "No," said John, "I shall not be able to help you." Or, "No matter," John said, "I will help him if I wish." *Indirect discourse* is the indirect expression of the words of a speaker, without quotation marks, and usually with *that*: John said that he should not be able to help you. Or, John said he would help you if he wished. Notice that *should* takes the place of *shall*, and *would* takes the place of *will*. In cases of doubt, recast the indirect discourse into direct discourse, to determine whether *shall* or *will* is required, and then use *should* or *would*, as the case may be, in the indirect discourse.

**IRREGULAR VERBS.**—There are quite a number of verbs in English, chiefly of Anglo-Saxon derivation, that form their various tenses irregularly. If one knows the principal parts, however, the rest of the forms are usually made according to the rules previously stated herein. The commoner irregular verbs are given in the following list, with their principal parts. They should be learned thoroughly, but this is not likely to be very difficult, for most of the forms will be familiar already because of everyday use.

PRESENT INFINITIVE (Present Tense)	PAST TENSE	PAST PARTICIPLE
arise	arose	arisen [awoke)
awake	awoke	awaked (or
be	was	been
bear	bore (or bare)	borne (or born)
beat	beat	beaten
become	became	become
befall	befell	befallen
begin	began	begun
behold	beheld	beheld
bend	bent	bent
beseech	besought	besought
bet	bet	bet
bid	bade	bidden
bid	bid	bid
bind	bound	bound
bite	bit	bitten
bleed	bled	bled
blow	blew	blown
break	broke	broken
bring	brought	brought
build	built (builded)	built (builded)
burst	burst	burst
buy	bought	bought
can	could	
cast	cast	cast
catch	caught	caught
choose	chose	chosen
cling	clung	clung
come	came	come
cost	cost	cost
creep	crept	crept
cut	cut	cut
deal	dealt	dealt
dig	dug (or digged)	dug (or digged)
do	did	done
draw	drew	drawn
drink	drank	drunk
drive	drove	driven
dwell	dwelt	dwelt
eat	ate	eaten
fall	fell	fallen

reen	reh	feē
feel	felt	felt
fight	fought	fought
find	found	found
flee	fled	fled
fling	flung	flung
fly	flew	flown
forbear	forbore	forborne
forbid	forbade	forbidden
forget	forgot	forgotten
forsake	forsook	forsaken
freeze	froze	frozen
get	got	got (or gotten)
give	gave	given
go	went	gone
grind	ground	ground
grow	grew	grown
hang	hung (hanged)	hung (hanged)
have	had	had
hear	heard	heard
hew	hewed	hewn
hide	hid	hidden
hit	hit	hit
hold	held	held
hurt	hurt	hurt
keep	kept	kept
kneel	kneelt (kneeled)	kneelt (kneeled)
knit	knit (knitted)	knit (knitted)
know	knew	known
lay	laid	laid
lead	led	led
leave	left	left
lend	lent	lent
let	let	let
lie	lay	lain
light	lit (or lighted)	lit (or lighted)
lose	lost	lost
make	made	made
may	might	
mean	meant	meant
meet	met	met
pay	paid	paid
put	put [quitted]	put [quitted]
quit	quit (or	quit (or
read	read	*ead

rid	rid	rid
ride	rode	ridden
ring	rang	rung
rise	rose	risen
run	ran	run
say	said	said
see	saw	seen
seek	sought	sought
sell	sold	sold
send	sent	sent
set	set	set
shake	shook	shaken
shall	should	
shed	shed [shined)	shed [shined)
shine	shone (or	shone (or
shoe	shod	shod
shoot	shot	shot
show	showed	shown
shrink	shrank	shrunk
shut	shut	shut
sing	sang	sung
sink	sank	sunk
sit	sat	sat
slay	slew	slain
slide	slid	slid
sling	slung	slung
smite	smote	smitten
sow	sowed	sown
speak	spoke	spoken
speed	sped	sped
spend	spent	spent
spin	spun	spun
spit	spat	spit
spread	spread	spread
spring	sprang	sprung
stand	stood [stayed)	stood [stayed)
stay	staid (or	staid (or
steal	stole	stolen
stick	stuck	stuck
sting	stung	stung
stride	strode	stridden
strike	struck	struck
		(or stricken)
string	strung	strung
strive	strove	strive



swear	swore	sworn
sweep	swept	swept [swelled]
swell	swelled	swollen (or
swim	swam	swum
swing	swung	swung
take	took	taken
teach	taught	taught
tear	tore	torn
tell	told	told
think	thought	thought
thrive	throve (thrived)	thriven (thrived)
throw	threw	thrown
thrust	thrust	thrust [trod]
tread	trod [waked]	trodden (or
wake	woke (or	waked (woke)
wear	wore	worn
weave	wove	woven
wed	wed	wed
weep	wept	wept
wet	wet	wet
whet	whet	whet
will	would	
win	won	won
wind	wound	wound
wring	wrung	wrung
write	wrote	written

The alternate forms in parentheses represent either old and nearly obsolete forms, forms (in the past participle) now used chiefly as adjectives, or forms that may be used interchangeably with the first form given. A few verbs are not listed that are uncommon or incomplete. *Ought* and *must*, for example, have no other forms. *Wrought* is an old form of the past tense and past participle of *work*. *Builded* is archaic or Biblical for *built*; it has a sense of stability and dignity that *built* does not possess. *Lighted* is often preferred to *lit*, which is more colloquial. *Hanged* is reserved for the capital punishment of death by hanging, while *hung* is used for past tense and past participle

of *hang* in its other meanings. *Shined* is used for past tense and participle of *shine* when it is transitive (as *to shine shoes*). *Staid* is more common as an adjective than as the past tense and past participle of *stay*.

WARNING.—*Drown* is a regular verb, and its other parts are therefore *drowned, drowned*. *Lie* (to tell a falsehood) is also regular (*lie, lied, lied*) and should be carefully differentiated from *lie* (to recline) and *lay* (transitive, to place something down). Compare these examples:

I *lied* about it, but I *lie* only when I must.

I sometimes *lie* on the couch to rest myself; I *lay* there yesterday, and I have often *lain* there in times past.

*Lay* the book on the table. It's all right; I *laid* it there myself this morning, and have *laid* it there regularly. (This verb is also used when speaking of hens or birds which *lay* eggs.)

*Flow* is another regular verb (*flow, flowed, flowed*) and should not be confused with the past forms of *fly*.

The conjugation of the verbs *be* and *have* can be learned from their use as auxiliaries in the conjugation of the verb *love*, on the preceding pages. The forms of the other verbs can be readily made from their principal parts.

## 5. ADVERB

An *adverb* is a word modifying, limiting, or describing a verb, an adjective, or another adverb. Examples: She dances *gracefully* (modifying the verb *dances*); He is *abnormally* good (modifying the adjective *good*); The dog barked *very* loudly (modifying the adverb *loudly*, which, in its turn, modifies the verb *barked*).

Adverbs tell place and direction (*here, there, up, down, over*); time and the order of occurrence (*now, then, always, next, first*); manner, the way in which something is done (*thus, well, immediately, gracefully, loudly*); degree, or the measure of intensity of an action or quality (*too, very, much, scarcely*); cause (some times called *modal* adverbs) and consequence (*hence, therefore, indeed, not, surely, consequently, why*).

*Interrogative* adverbs ask questions (distinguish from interrogative pronouns; see *Pro-noun*), as: "*Why* are you going?" Other interrogative adverbs are: *how, when, whence, where, whether, why*. *Conjunctive* adverbs are used as conjunctions (see *Conjunction*): *how, now, since, so, when, whence, where, why, while*. *There* in expressions *there is* and *there are* is an adverb (an *expletive*). *Yes* and *no* are always adverbs (sometimes called *responsives*).

**COMPARISON OF ADVERBS.**—Adverbs are very much like adjectives (a great many adverbs are formed from adjectives by adding *-ly* to the positive form), and some of them can be compared in the same way as adjectives. Most of them are compared with *more* and *most* (or *less* and *least*).

Adverbs are the prodigals of the English language. They are often used quite independently of other parts of speech. If any word in any sentence has no other possible capacity, it is very likely to be an adverb. In this sentence: "*Well, I guess so,*" *well* has no relation to any other word, but it is an adverb; *so* is also an adverb, telling *how* I guess.

## 6. PREPOSITION

Prepositions are usually little words. There are not many more than a hundred in the whole language, and about fifty are in common use. A *preposition* connects a following noun or pronoun (or word used substantively) to some other word in the sentence in such a way that the preposition forms a modifying phrase (prepositional phrase) with the word that follows it in the objective case as its *object*. Examples: "Jack and Jill went *up the hill*" (*up* connects its object *hill* with the verb *went*, forming a prepositional phrase used adverbially to modify *went*, telling place or direction); "*In the spring* a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love" (*in* connects its object *spring* with *turns*, forming an adverbial phrase telling time; *of* connects its object *love* to *thoughts*, forming an adjective phrase telling the kind of thoughts).

Some common prepositions are: *about, above, across, after, against, along, among, around, at, before, behind, below, beside, between, but, by, down, during, except, for, from, in, inside, into, like, near, of, off, on, out, outside, over, since, through, throughout, till, to, under, until, up, upon, with, within, without*. There are also some "compound prepositions" which are nothing more than prepositional phrases of a sort, used as prepositions, such as: *on account of, in spite of, because of, for the sake of*, etc. It is well to avoid, whenever possible, the occurrence of two or more prepositions in succession. In the sentence: "*He gazed out over the city,*" *over* is a preposition, but *out* is used adverbially with the verb. In such phrases or sentences as *he sat down*, the word of direction

(here *down*, normally a preposition) is an adverb. Which is as much as to say that a great many words in English are sometimes one part of speech, and sometimes another.

## 7. CONJUNCTION

A *conjunction* is a connecting word occurring at the *junction* of two parts of a sentence. It is used to join together words, phrases, clauses, and sentences (independent clauses, or to connect a succeeding sentence to one that has gone before). Sometimes other parts of speech are used as conjunctions; sometimes groups of words are used as a single conjunction would be used. *Coordinate* conjunctions connect two elements of a sentence that stand in the same grammatical relationship, have, that is, the same grammatical weight or importance—as two nouns used similarly, two prepositional phrases, two dependent clauses or two independent clauses, etc. Examples: You *and* I; To live *and* to work are good; I would like to do so, *but* I cannot; John must come *or* Ethel will die; etc. *Subordinate* conjunctions join subordinate or dependent clauses (grammatically inferior to or of lower standing than the rest of the sentence) to the rest of the sentence. Examples: I'd go *if* I could; *Since* he hasn't arrived, we'll start; *Lest* we forget, let us give; etc.

Some common conjunctions are: *also, although, and, as, because, both, but, either, except, for, however, if, lest, neither, nevertheless, nor, notwithstanding, only, or, save, since, so, still, than, that, then, therefore, through, unless, what, when, whereas, whereat, whereby, wherefore, wherein, whereof, whereupon, wherever, whether, while, without, yet*. Of these, many are adverbs normally, and so, when used

as conjunctions, are sometimes called *conjunctive adverbs*. There are a number of phrases used as conjunctions, called *phrasal conjunctions*: *as if, as though, in order that, as soon as, as long as, so that*, etc.

A few conjunctions are used in pairs, and are called *correlatives*: *both . . . and, either . . . or, neither . . . nor, whether . . . or, not only . . . but also*, etc.

### C. INTERJECTION

An *interjection* is all that its name implies—it is usually an expletive or an exclamation used independently, *interjected* into the sentence or group of sentences, or used all by itself in speech. *Ah* and *ouch* are familiar interjections. An interjection is often followed by exclamation point. Examples: *Hello! So! Ahem! Hah!*

## THE SENTENCE

## 1. STRUCTURE

A *sentence* is a complete statement, having a *subject* and a *predicate* (see below); it begins with a capital letter and ends with a period. (An interrogation mark or exclamation point may take the place of the period.) Short elements—even a single word—are considered as sentences in the practical use of English; thus, in the next paragraph, a connected example of several short sentences is given.

*Will you go? No. You must. No! I say go. I will not. Go! Never.*

For all practical purposes, it is correct to consider these elements as sentences—any word or group of words ending with a complete stop (period, interrogation mark, exclamation point) may therefore be regarded as a sentence.

However, a *complete* sentence should contain a verb. The verb (see *Verb*) asserts something concerning its *subject*, which must be a noun or a pronoun or some word or group of words used as such. The subject is the first division of the sentence: it includes the simple subject (the one word or group of words used substantively as the subject of the verb) and all its modifiers—in normal sentences every word up to but not including the verb is the subject. The verb and its *object* (direct or indirect; in the cases of intransitive verbs, of course, no object can be included), with their modifiers, form the *predicate*—the second division of the sentence. In the following examples the subjects are in *italics*, the predicates in ordinary type.

*John works. The dog barked. Our little kitten ran away. People who are healthy have excellent appetites. The United States of America, now the wealthiest and most stable government in the world, broadcasts, figuratively speaking, its respected influence to the farthest and most obscure corners of the globe.*

**KINDS OF SENTENCES.**—Sentences may be classed according to the kind of statement they make, or according to their structure, as follows: *Declarative* sentences make an assertion or declare something; *interrogative* sentences ask questions (followed by an interrogation mark “?”); *exclamatory* sentences ejaculate something, denoting surprise or astonishment (followed by an exclamation point “!”); *simple* sentences contain only one clause; *complex* sentences contain one principal or main clause and one or more subordinate clauses; *compound* sentences contain two or more principal clauses, with or without subordinate clauses; (if with subordinate clauses, they are both compound and complex).

**CLAUSES.**—A *clause* is a group of words containing a subject and predicate (like a sentence) but forms part of a sentence and does not stand alone. A principal or *independent* clause makes an assertion by itself, and, as far as structure is concerned, can stand alone as a complete sentence. Example: “The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here” (the coordinate conjunction *but* connects two independent clauses, each of which can stand alone as a complete statement; in the first, *world* is the common subject of two verbs, *will note* and *remember*; *what*, a relative pronoun without an expressed antecedent (see *Details*), introduces a subordinate or dependent clause which *cannot* stand alone as a com-



plete statement). A subordinate or *dependent* clause is normally *introduced* by a subordinate conjunction, a relative pronoun, or some word used as such; it has a subject and predicate, but cannot stand alone as a complete sentence (hence, *dependent*); it is usually used as a single part of speech (noun, adjective, or adverb). In the example above, the subordinate clause introduced by *what* is used substantively (as a noun) as the common object of the verbs *will note* and *remember* (*will* is understood as the auxiliary of *remember* also). A second subordinate clause is introduced by a second *what*, and is used as the object of *can forget*.

Direct quotations forming parts of sentences are classed as subordinate clauses, although they seldom have introductory words. In this sentence: "*I'll go,*" he said, "*if you will let me.*" the subject of the main verb *said* is *he*, and *I'll go* and *if you will let me* are subordinate clauses, to be considered separately in analyzing the sentence.

**PHRASES.**—A *phrase* is a group of words used like a single part of speech (as a subordinate clause is), but without a subject and predicate. A *prepositional* phrase (see *Preposition*) is composed of a preposition and its object with its modifiers, when the modifiers are single words preceding the object. An *infinitive* phrase (see *Verb*) consists of an infinitive and its subject, object, and modifiers. A *participial* phrase consists of a participle and its object with its modifiers. Examples:

We stopped *at a hotel* (prepositional, used adverbially). We asked *him to help us* (infinitive, *him* as subject—the subject of an infinitive is always in the objective case—*us* as object, used substantively as object of *asked*). *Entering the room suddenly*, George was dumfounded (participial, *room* as object, modified

by *suddenly*, used adjectively to modify *George*).

**CAPITALS.**—For instruction in the use of capitals and the hyphen, see the section devoted to this subject in *Spelling Self Taught* (Little Blue Book No. 681).

## 2. PUNCTUATION

Punctuation, though properly a part of grammar, has been considered of sufficient importance for separate treatment. For good sentence structure and good English generally, punctuation is just as great a factor as any other single phase of language and its use. The omission of even so small a mark as a comma can change the sense of a whole sentence. Consider: *Mr. Brown said the doctor was going to die.* That says one thing, but the addition of two little commas makes the same words say quite another thing. Thus: *Mr. Brown, said the doctor, was going to die.*

The subject has been given full treatment in *Punctuation Self Taught* (Little Blue Book No. 583), in the same general style as the present text—with rules, adequate explanation, and numerous examples.

## RECAPITULATION

## 1. PARSING

*Parsing* a word is the telling (1) what part of speech it is, (2) what form it is (if noun or pronoun, the case; if adjective or adverb, the degree; if verb, the voice, mood, tense, person, and number), (3) how it is used, (4) what rule it follows. This is an exercise in grammatical gymnastics that can be made both interesting and exciting. At the same time, it is excellent drill in the principles of grammar. In the following discussion, the rules (4) have been omitted.

*The thunder rumbles.*

The subject is *the thunder*, simple or main subject *thunder*; the predicate is *rumbles*. *Thunder* is a common noun, singular number, neuter gender, nominative case as subject of the verb *rumbles*. *The* is a definite article modifying *thunder*. *Rumbles* is an intransitive verb, regular, of which the principal parts are *rumble, rumbled, rumbled*; it is in the active voice, indicative mood, present tense, third person, singular number.

*The loud thunder rumbles across the sky.*

The subject is *the loud thunder*, simple subject *thunder*; the predicate is *rumbles across the sky*. *The* and *thunder* are parsed as in the first example. *Loud* is a common adjective, positive degree, modifying *thunder*. *Rumbles* is parsed as above. *Across* is a preposition, forming, with its object *sky*, a prepositional phrase used adverbially, modifying *rumbles* (tells *where*). *The* is a definite article, modifying

*sky.* *Sky* is a common noun, singular number, neuter gender, objective case as the object of the preposition *across*.

*The loud thunder rumbles angrily, while the vivid lightning darts in zigzag forks across the sky.*

The subject is *the loud thunder*, simple subject *thunder*; the predicate is *rumbles angrily, while the vivid lightning darts in zigzag forks across the sky*. The first four words are parsed as above. *Angrily* is a simple adverb, positive degree, modifying *rumbles* (tells how). *While* is a subordinate conjunction (or conjunctive adverb of time), introducing a subordinate clause used adverbially to modify *rumbles*. *The* is a definite article, modifying *lightning*. *Vivid* is a common adjective, positive degree, modifying *lightning*. *Lightning* is a common noun, singular number, neuter gender, nominative case as subject of *darts*; *the vivid lightning* is the complete subject of the subordinate clause, and all the following words are the complete predicate. *Darts* is an intransitive verb, regular, of which the principal parts are *dart, darted, darted*; it is in the active voice, indicative mood, present tense, third person, singular number. *In* is a preposition, forming, with its object *forks* (and its modifier *zigzag*), a prepositional phrase used adverbially to modify *darts* (tells how). *Zigzag* is a common adjective modifying *forks*. *Forks* is a common noun, neuter gender, plural number, objective case as object of the preposition *in*. *Across the sky* is parsed as above, save that here it modifies *darts*.

*Mary heard the loud thunder rumbling and was frightened.*

The subject is *Mary*; the predicate is all that follows. *Mary* is a proper noun, feminine gender, singular number, nominative case as sub-

ject of *heard* and of *was*. *Heard* is a transitive verb, irregular, of which the principal parts are *hear, heard, heard*; it is in the active voice, indicative mood, past tense, third person, singular number. *The* is a definite article, modifying *thunder*. *Loud* is parsed as above. *Thunder* is a common noun, neuter gender, singular number, objective case as object of the verb *heard*. *Rumbling* is a present participle, used here as a verbal adjective modifying *thunder*. *And* is a coordinate conjunction joining the two elements of a double or compound predicate, having *Mary* as a common subject. *Was* is an intransitive (or copulative) verb, irregular, of which the principal parts are *be, was, been*; it is in the active voice, indicative mood, past tense, third person, singular number. *Frightened* is a past participle, here used adjectively as a predicate adjective modifying the subject *Mary*.

*The thunder is stilled by the hand of God.*

The subject is *the thunder*, simple subject *thunder*; the predicate is all that follows. *The* is a definite article, modifying *thunder*. *Thunder* is a common noun, neuter gender, singular number, nominative case as subject of *is stilled*. *Is stilled* is a transitive verb, regular, of which the principal parts are *still, stilled, stilled*; it is in the passive voice, indicative mood, present tense, third person, singular number. *By* is a preposition, forming with its object *hand* a prepositional phrase used adverbially to modify *is stilled*, indicating the agent of the action. *The* is a definite article, modifying *hand*. *Hand* is a common noun, neuter gender, singular number, objective case as object of the preposition *by*. *Of* is a preposition, forming with its object *God* a prepositional phrase used adjectively to modify *hand*. *God* is a proper

noun, masculine gender, singular number, objective case as object of the preposition *of*.

*If it were not for thunder and lightning, I might enjoy life.*

The subject is all up to and including *I*, simple subject *I*; the predicate is the rest. *If* is a subordinate conjunction, introducing the conditional clause that follows, ending with *lightning*. *It* is a personal pronoun without an expressed antecedent (used as an expletive, see *Details*), neuter gender, third person, singular number, nominative case as subject of *were*. *Were* is an intransitive (or copulative) verb, irregular, of which the principal parts are *be, was, been*; it is in the active voice, subjunctive mood, third person, singular number. *Not* is a modal adverb, modifying *were*. *For* is a preposition, forming with its two objects *thunder* and *lightning* a compound prepositional phrase, used adjectively as a predicate adjective combination to modify *it*. *Thunder* is parsed as above, objective case as object of *for*; *lightning* ditto. *And* is a coordinate conjunction connecting the two objects of *for*. *I* is a personal pronoun, referring to the speaker, unknown gender, first person, singular number, nominative case as subject of *might enjoy*. *Might enjoy* is a transitive verb, regular, of which the principal parts are *enjoy, enjoyed, enjoyed*. *Might* is an auxiliary forming with *enjoy* the past tense of what is sometimes called the potential mood, active voice, first person, singular number. *Enjoy* is the infinitive, conjugated with the auxiliary *might*. *Life* is a common noun, neuter gender, singular number, objective case as object of *might enjoy*.

*Thunder, depart!*

*Thunder* forms an apparent subject, but is

actually the *object*, in sense, of *depart*; it is a common noun, neuter gender, singular number, used in address and is sometimes considered in the vocative case, sometimes in the nominative. *Depart* is an intransitive (so takes no real object) verb, regular, of which the principal parts are *depart*, *departed*, *departed*; it is in the active voice, imperative mood, singular number.

*The lightning has struck Brown's barn.*

The subject is *the lightning*, simple subject *lightning*; the predicate is all that follows. *Lightning* is parsed as above, nominative case as subject of *has struck*. *Has struck* is a transitive verb, irregular, of which the principal parts are *strike*, *struck*, *struck*; it is in the active voice, indicative mood, present perfect tense, third person, singular number. (*Has* is an auxiliary conjugated with the past participle *struck*: an unnecessary explanation in this case, for the present perfect tense is known to be this.) *Brown's* is a proper noun, assumably masculine gender, singular number, possessive case. *Barn* is a common noun, neuter gender, singular number, objective case as object of *has struck*.

## 2. DRILL SENTENCES

The following sentences all contain one or more errors in grammar. They are corrected, with necessary explanations, in Section 4, following. It is suggested that, for drill, the student try to correct them for himself, and try also to give reasons for his corrections.

1. The three musketeers was friends of each other.
2. Bob or Bill don't talk that way.
3. Each of your circles ought to be more circular than they are.

4. These kind of apples is the best of the two.
5. To almost do a thing is more manlier then not to even try it.
6. There isn't enough forks to go around.
7. The three first chapters of this book are the best.
8. Don't it look cloudy.
9. Who are they talking about?
10. This is confidential, between you and I.
11. I didn't hardly hear him.
12. Whose there? Its me.
13. I told her of him coming in advance.
14. I guess I'll lay down now, and see if I can rest a little.
15. Your liable to loose money carried like lose change.
16. I will accept your invitation, and shall be there at all costs.
17. Can I wear my sandals today mother?
18. Three dollars and forty-one cents were all I had.
19. This pie don't taste as bad as it looks.
20. Everyone of our chickens hatched and are alive.
21. Tales of a traveler were written by Irving.
22. The covering of the chairs were torn.
23. All but he was able to go.
24. Tell me if I can go.
25. The speaker inferred that his audience was all idiots.
26. The colors of the American flag is red, white and blue.
27. You find you have trouble with grammar, and it isn't strange for one to find it hard.
28. There is fresh air, wonderful views, and good train service.
29. Myself and daughter are coming.
30. We awaited for you an hour.
31. Lets you and I go.
32. This color is a different shade than that.
33. The hands should be washed daily, taking particular pains with the knuckles and nails.
34. He has ability, strength, original, and good health.
35. Members of our society are New Yorkers,



from the West, natives of Hawaii, and all the way from South America.

36. We repair radiators, recharge batteries, and also carbon taken out.

37. Whatever he done, none of us were able to prove it.

38. I waked at nine o'clock, but I don't know what awoke me.

39. Our service can't be beat.

40. Ours ended when your's begun.

41. We won the race easy.

42. I was near dead last night I was so sleepy. How did you sleep?

43. I slept good. Fine, in fact.

44. The lake looks beautifully by moonlight.

45. I feel bad someplace but I can't tell where.

46. Alright then don't ask any more favors from me.

47. These are the sort of days I like.

48. At a fire everybody loses their head.

49. Neither of us told our wife about it.

50. I wish I had a parrot like Mary's.

### 3. DETAILS

ONLY.—Beware of where *only* is placed in a given sentence. Be sure that it is placed so that the word it modifies is unmistakable. Compare *Only bad men are ignorant* and *Bad men are only ignorant*. Notice the difference in these expressions: *Only we want reform*; *We only want reform*; *We want only reform*.

IT.—The pronoun *it* is often used without an antecedent, expressed or unexpressed, in idioms such as *it rains*, *it may snow*, *it isn't true*, etc. (In the last example, *it* may refer to a definite antecedent.)

WHAT.—*What*, properly a relative pronoun, is often used in idioms without an antecedent: I don't know *what* he means.

THERE.—*There*, an adverb, in sentences be-

ginning *there is* or *there are*, throws the subject after the verb, but the verb must agree with that subject in person and number: *There are four people here* (*people* is subject, plural); *There is no reason for it* (*reason* is subject, singular).

COGNATE OBJECT.—Some intransitive verbs occasionally take an apparent object, in certain emphatic uses: *He lived a life of sin*. *Life* is parsed as a cognate object of the intransitive verb *lived*, or, in this sentence, *lived* may be regarded as transitive.

IDIOMS.—An *idiom* is an expression, usually non-grammatical, which by long usage has become an authentic part of the language and is considered correct. Most idioms cannot be parsed. *It's me* is fast becoming a recognized idiom, although correct grammar insists on *it's I*. In the sentence *The beggar was given a penny by the child*, the word *penny* presents some difficulty. The expression is idiomatic, so that *penny* is sometimes called an idiomatic "object" of *was given*.

COMPOUND SUBJECT.—When two or more elements that are of different persons occur in a subject, the verb agrees, according to rule, with the nearer: *You or I am going*. When connected by *and* the same subject becomes plural: *You and I are going*. When the expression becomes awkward, use two verbs: *Either you are wrong or John is* (rather than: *Either you or John is wrong*).

Similar to this are expressions requiring a repetition of construction to insure the completion of each element. RIGHT: *I like it as much as or more than he does* (NOT: *I like it as much or more than he does*). RIGHT: *I first gave it to and then took it away from*

him (NOT: I first gave and then took it away from him).

THAN.—*Than* is never a preposition. I like it better than *he* (than he *does*, is understood; not *than him*). He treated me worse than him (than *he did* him, is understood).

AIN'T, CAN'T.—*Ain't* is a vulgarism for *am not*, *is not*, or *are not*. It should be strenuously avoided. *Can't* has become a recognized colloquial form of *can not* (written also *cannot*), and may be used in less formal speech or writing.

HAD OUGHT.—*Ought* is sufficient without *had*. Never use this atrocious combination. Either say *I had to* (for past time) or *I have to* or *I ought to* (for present time).

DOUBLE NEGATIVE.—Avoid using two negatives in the same construction. "Two negatives make an affirmative." *I don't want none*, if carefully considered, means *I want some*; the correct form is, of course, *I don't want any*. Notice that *hardly*, *scarcely*, etc., are adverbs with a negative force, so that *not* or any other negative expression should not be used with them. Either say *I hardly think so* or *I don't think so* (NEVER: *I don't hardly think so*).

BETWEEN, AMONG.—*Between* is used only for two persons or things. There is no such curio extant as *between the three of us*. *Among* is used to express distribution among more than two persons or things.

#### 4. THE CORRECTED FIFTY

Correct forms of the fifty maltreated sentences under Section 2:

1. The Three Musketeers were friends of one another.

2. Bob or Bill doesn't talk that way.
3. Each of your circles ought to be more carefully drawn than it is.
4. This kind of apples is the better of the two.
5. Almost to do a thing is more manly (or "manlier," without "more") than not even to try it.
6. There are not enough forks to go around.
7. The first three chapters of this book are the best.
8. Doesn't it look cloudy?
9. Whom are they talking about? Or, About whom are they talking?
10. This is confidential, between you and me.
11. I hardly heard him.
12. Who's there? It's I.
13. I told her in advance of his coming.
14. I guess I'll lie down now, to see whether I can rest a little.
15. You're liable to lose money carried like loose change.
16. I accept your invitation, and will be there at all costs.
17. May I wear my sandals today, mother?
18. Three dollars and forty-one cents was all I had.
19. This pie doesn't taste so bad as it looks.
20. Every one of our chickens hatched and is alive.
21. "Tales of a Traveler" was written by Irving.
22. The covering of the chairs was torn.
23. All but him were able to go.
24. Tell me whether I may go.
25. The speaker implied that his audience was made up of idiots.
26. The colors of the American flag are red, white, and blue.
27. You find you have trouble with grammar, and it isn't strange for you to find it hard.
28. There are fresh air, wonderful views, and good train service.
29. My daughter and I are coming.
30. We waited for you an hour. Or, we awaited you an hour.
31. Let's you and me go.

32. This color is a different shade from that.

33. You should wash your hands daily, taking particular pains with the knuckles and nails. Or, The hands should be washed daily, particular pains being taken with the knuckles and nails.

34. He has ability, strength, originality, and good health.

35. Members of our society come from New York, from the West, from Hawaii, and all the way from South America.

36. We repair radiators, recharge batteries, and remove carbon.

37. Whatever he did, none of us was able to prove it.

38. I awoke at nine o'clock, but I don't know what awakened me. Or,—woke me.

39. Our service cannot be beaten. Or (colloquially), Our service can't be beaten.

40. Ours ended when yours began.

41. We won the race easily.

42. I was nearly dead last night, I was so sleepy. How did you sleep?

43. I slept well. Finely, in fact.

44. The lake looks beautiful by moonlight.

45. I feel bad somewhere, but I can't tell where.

46. All right, then, don't ask any more favors of me.

47. This is the sort of weather I like.

48. At a fire everybody loses his head.

49. Neither of us told his wife about it.

50. I wish I had a parrot like Mary's!

DISCUSSION.—(1) The verb should agree with its subject in number; *each* refers to one of two when it is used reciprocally; (2) *or* makes the compound subject singular in effect; (3) *circular* cannot be compared; the subject is *each*, singular, so *they* must become *it*; (4) *this*, to agree with *kind*; in comparisons between two objects the comparative degree is used; (5) never "split" infinitives, that is, no word should come between the *to* of an infinitive and the verb form that follows it; (7) no

book has three "first chapters"; (8) *don't* is a contraction of *do not*, but *does not* is required by *it* as subject; (13) if *him* is used it becomes the object of the preposition and leaves the participle dangling without a place, so that *his*, a pronominal adjective, should be used to modify the participle; (14) avoid using *and* for *to*, although it is almost idiomatic in such expressions as *I'll go and see*; (16) the invitation is accepted in present time, but acting upon it is done in future time; (17) *can* asks whether she has the ability, *may* is the proper word to ask permission; (18) the sum of money is considered as a sum, and is therefore singular; (19) *so . . . as* is considered a better form than *as . . . as*, whenever it can be used; *one* is subject, singular; (21) the title, as the name of one book, is singular; (23) *but* is a preposition here, requiring the objective case; (24) *whether* and not *if* is used in indirect questions; (25) it is possible only to *infer* what someone else *implies*; (27) within a given sentence or discussion, maintain the same person throughout; (29) avoid using *myself* or other *-self* forms when the simple pronoun can be used; (31) expanded, it is *let us*, and *you and me* are properly in apposition with *us*, hence they must be objective; (32) *from* (never *to* or *than*) is used with *different*; (33) be sure to have a substantive present for verbal adjectives to modify; (34) members of a coordinate series should be of similar construction, so these should be all nouns; (41) an adverb is required, to modify *won*; (42-43) notice carefully whether adverbs or adjectives are required in a given sentence; (44) *beautiful* is required to modify *lake*, for it cannot modify *looks*; (46) never use *alright* for *all right*. Corrections not explained here are held to be self-evident, or have been discussed elsewhere in the text.

# GRAMMAR SELF TAUGHT

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